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## A Contextual Analysis of Θεραπεία (Healing) of a Centurion's Servant In Luke 7:1-10 in Relation to Healing Practices in the Christ Apostolic Church, Ibadan, Nigeria

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### Abstract:

Healing and health are fundamental to human life. People go to any extent to seek healing. When orthodox medicine fails, people do not hesitate to go to prayer houses and even herbalists to procure healing. The centrality of healing features prominently in Jesus' earthly ministry. In compliance with Jesus' instruction to his followers to preach the gospel and heal the sick, the CAC has made healing one of its major preoccupations. However, there are cases of ministers using extra-Biblical means to perform healing such as the sale of anointing oil, handkerchief, and water. Also, ministers seek gratification from beneficiaries of healing and other abuses that were not witnessed during Jesus' ministry. Therefore, this study investigated healing in Luke's Gospel and its application in Christ Apostolic Church to ascertain the degree of compliance to Jesus' command. The study adopted a mixed method comprising hermeneutical and exegetical methods to analyse the text to bring out the essential meaning of healing in the Bible in relation to the practice of the CAC, and a descriptive method of a survey type was employed. The results of the interview were qualitatively analysed. The study concluded that healing is a fundamental aspect of the liturgy and practice of the CAC, which helps in bringing members to salvation. Therefore, the study recommended that the church's authority should ensure strict compliance with the principles and techniques of healing adopted by Jesus in Luke's Gospel.

**Keywords:** *θεραπεία (Therapeia), Healing, Healing miracle, Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)*

### 1. Introduction

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between Jesus' healing miracles in Luke 7:1-10 and healing miracles being performed in the Christ Apostolic Church, Ibadan, Nigeria, with the view to following the pattern and model of Jesus' healing miracles recorded in the Gospel of Luke (Adegboyega, 2008, p. 27). Many sick people, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria, go to Churches in search of healing miracles and security when they have tried orthodox medicine to no avail. Then, they conclude that sickness is a form of satanic attack or oppression. Some resort to the Church after they have spent so much money on medication without much improvement. They do this in the hope of receiving healing from their pastors in the way that people of Jesus' generation received healings from him (Abogunrin, 2009, p. 12).

The Bible is replete with accounts of Jesus' healing miracles. A good number of these healing miracles are recorded in the synoptic Gospels, particularly the Gospel of Luke, which contains a good account of these healing miracles. How well these pastors are meeting the yearnings of these people is a question to be answered in this study. Consequently, some pastors abuse the sick due to their desperate situations and exploit them. This, however, does not erase the fact that there are still genuine healing miracles in the Church today. The problem is how to distinguish between genuine and fake healing miracles and ensure that the Church continues to follow the pattern and model of Jesus' healing miracles recorded in the Gospel of Luke (Adamo, 2012, pp. 43-45).

Also, the undue overemphasis placed on the anointing and the anointed men had resulted in various forms of corruption in the Church. Many believe that 'character equals anointing' and assume that spiritual gifts and anointing endorse character regardless of the lifestyle of the anointed man. Consequently, the lifestyle of some ministers through which the healing miracles are performed is not worthy of emulation, and this discourages many serious-minded people who wonder how such categories of people could be used by God. Some are said to be adulterers, fornicators, or belonging to familiar spirits, etc.

The craving for healing miracles has also, in some cases, led to separation and division in the church. For instance, those who are endowed with the gift of healing often leave their place of worship to start their own churches under the pretence of God's calling, taking away some of the members of their former church. Moreover, some use the gift to enrich themselves, exploiting the sick people who are greatly in need of healing from God and thereby turning it into a 'money-making' venture. The proud attitude of some of these ministers who perform healing miracles leads to competition among them at times, and that breeds enmity and unhealthy rivalry in the Church (Ademola, 2007, pp. 23-27).

They see themselves as one that must be worshipped and respected, indirectly placing them in the position of God. The gift of healing is, therefore, seen as a personal property. Viewed from the various cases of abuse of the gift of healing, one cannot but be tempted to believe that many things must have gone wrong. This has prompted the study to examine the missing link between the healing miracles of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel according to Luke and healing practices in the Christ Apostolic Church to deduce some principles that could help address the anomalies.

## 2. Exegesis of Healing of a Centurion's Servant (Luke 7:1-10)

The story of the healing of the centurion's servant appears in the gospel of Matthew and Luke (Adolph, 2016, p.40). It may thus be loosely referred to as 'Q material'. However, a few minutes with a synopsis will reveal that the relation between the two accounts is anything but an extra equivalence. There is nearly verbal equivalence in the dialogue in verses 7:6b, 7b-9 (Matthew 8:8b-10), but for the rest, while the essential features of the story are the same, they are told in a very different way (Afolabi, 2013, p. 52). Matthew is short and to the point but includes verses 11-12, a Q saying which Luke records in a quite different context (13:28-29), and which was therefore presumably preserved independently and inserted here by Matthew because he found it relevant in the context. Luke, on the other hand, is more leisurely and colourful in his telling of the story, including extra detail about the centurion's Jewish sympathies, and in particular, the account of his having approached Jesus through his friends rather than his person as in Matthew's version (Alana, 1999, p. 19).

Convinced advocates of Q as a single document are, therefore, reduced to believing that Q preserved the dialogue, with perhaps a brief indication of the narrative setting, and the evangelists were allowed to supply the details from oral tradition. Those who, in any case, find a unitary Q hard to swallow, find here further evidence for an oral tradition that preserves the significant sayings with great fidelity, perhaps jotting them down to aid memory, but were less concerned with the verbatim form of the narrative. At any rate, the significant point is that what mattered to early Christians in this incident was primarily the dialogue to which it led. Doctrinaire form-critics will, therefore, label it a pronouncement story apophthegm rather than a miracle story; those less worried about exact labeling may be inclined to ask why it should not be both! However, it is certainly not just a miracle story: attention is focused on the sayings about authority and faith (Abogunrin, 2009, pp. 24-31).

Apart from questions of exact wording and emphasis, the only significant factual discrepancy between the two accounts is whether the centurion approached Jesus through his Jewish friends (Luke) or in person (Matthew). Which is the original version? Has Luke added the messengers to emphasise the centurion's humility (Luke 7:7a), or has Matthew abbreviated the story by omitting what he regarded as essential detail? Here commentators differ in their conclusions, often depending on their presuppositions about the 'law of tradition', whether oral material tends to lose inessential details in transmission or to be elaborated in the interest of storytelling (Wilkinson, 2001, pp. 189-197). It must be remembered, however, that it is almost certainly not a question of either evangelist sitting down with a written account of the event in front of him and deliberately either abbreviating or expanding it. It is a question of an orally preserved story which each tells in his own way, including as much detail as he feels is necessary to make his point. Matthew is concerned to emphasise the faith of the centurion, and for this purpose, the messengers are irrelevant. On the other hand, Luke wishes to indite his humility, and here the sending of the messengers is significant. Thus, to the question of whether there actually were any messengers or not, the answer should probably be 'yes'; one should be missing the point if Matthew is accused of falsification (Wieland, 2005, p. 33).

His deliberate abbreviation is a valid literary device to throw the emphasis clearly on the central theme of the story, the centurion's faith. His omission makes no significant difference either to the miracle or to the crucial dialogue. If anything, it highlights the latter.

The importance of the sketching in this last paragraph is the contribution of redaction-criticism to exegesis in this particular case. A comparison of the handling of the story by the two authors has alerted to Matthew's primary intention in telling the story, to teach about faith. This insight is clearly going to be significant in the detailed exegesis. The Capernaum was one of the leading towns of Galilee, a prosperous lake-side community, which was Jesus' base for much of his Galilean ministry (Alana, 2008, pp.23-28).

This latter fact accounts for the centurion's awareness of Jesus' healing power: it was, no doubt, the talk of the town, the detail about centurions. They were the backbone of the Roman army and the NCOs whose discipline depended on responsible and respected officers. No Roman legions were stationed in Palestine, but Herod Antipas had a small force of auxiliaries under his control. These were all non-Jewish troops, drawn largely from the area of Lebanon and Syria. The centurion was, therefore, certainly not the Jew, though Luke makes much of his sympathy for the Jewish religion. It is as the believing Gentile that he finds his significance in Matthew's account. Is this perhaps another reason for Matthew's omission of the Jewish friends? To avoid blurring the sharp Jew/Gentile contrast, which is a prominent feature of his version of the story, coming into sharp focus, Luke is concerned only with the man's character, while Matthew's concern is with his nationality.

Furthermore, Luke raises two points of translation, both of some importance for exegesis. The first is the centurion's address to Jesus, κύριε which should be translated 'Lord', or as in Moffatt, NEB, Jerusalem Bible, 'Sir'. In other words, 'is it just a polite form of address, or does it imply more? AG opined that κύριε is 'a form of address to a respected person.' MM showed that in secular Greek, apart from its use of a god, it certainly involves an acknowledgement of superiority, particularly in addressing a higher official. However, when used as a form of address to Jesus, the precise connotation of such a flexible word obviously cannot be determined by the dictionary but by what the context tells of the person's attitude to Jesus.<sup>12</sup> The centurion regards Jesus as a superior authority and a worker of miraculous healing, so

'Sir' seems a bit weak. On the other hand, there is no indication that he attributed to Jesus any divine status, as 'Lord' might well imply. However it is translated, κύριε should be regarded as acknowledging the superiority of Jesus but cannot be pressed into an indication of the centurion's Christological understanding (Howard, 2008, pp. 43-47).

More important is the word παῖς which can mean either 'child' or 'servant'. Traditionally, it has always been translated 'servant', but this is based on Luke, who has used the unambiguous term (as well as παῖς in Luke δούλος 7:7). But was this what Matthew meant? 'Unquestionable παῖς in Matthew 8:6 is to be understood as a child: δούλος in Luke 7:2 is an error in reproduction.' Like many of Bultmann's 'Unquestionable' pronouncements, this is not supported by any argument. The exegete should be on his guard against unsupported dogmatic assertions, by however august an authority! What is the evidence? παῖς occurred 24 times in the New Testament (Bultmann, 2014, p. 99). In only one of these, it means 'son' (John 4:51); in eight other cases, it clearly means 'child' but with implying any relationship to the speaker or to a character in the narrative. In four cases, it referred to a 'servant' of a man, and in eight cases, to a 'servant' of God. Thus if παῖς in Matthew 8:6, 8, 13 means centurion's 'son', it would agree with the only use of the word by John against all the Matthew and Luke usage. MM also showed that both 'child' and 'servant' were common meanings in secular Greek, but apparently not 'son'. In Matthew outside this passage, there are three uses in the sense of 'child' ('not son'), and two in the sense of 'servant', one of which is parallel to the sort of 'retainer' envisaged here (Grasswell, 2005, pp. 89-96).

Thus, there seems no reason for a driving wedge between Matthew and Luke at this point or for doubting that Matthew is using παῖς in exactly the same sense that Luke does in Luke 7:7, where it is parallel to δούλος in Luke 7:2. While δούλος was the formal, official term for a slave, παῖς was used for a slave who held in person friendship (Luke 7:2, ἐντιμος). The use of 'boy' for servants in colonial days may be roughly parallel (Lohmeyer, 2003, pp. 66-72).

Matthew does not emphasise, as Luke did, the centurion's fondness of his servant, which would be remarkable, but not unparallel, in non-Jewish circles. He was not as interested in the man's character as in his faith. His kind-heartedness and friendly relations with the Jewish community are irrelevant to this purpose, and only what is necessary to the story is retained (Back, 1999, pp. 76-81).

Apparently, the use of punctuation posed a significant problem. It all turns on the punctuation: are the words of Jesus a promise or a question? Greek manuscripts bore no punctuation marks, and such questions frequently arise. Often they are of considerable exegetical importance. Sometimes linguistic considerations help to provide an answer. More often, one may entirely depend on the context. The one striking linguistic feature is the very prominent ἐγώ. Greek does not actually include personal pronouns in addition to the person indicated by the verb 'inflection' unless there is a need to emphasise the person. When the pronoun comes first in the sentence, the emphasis is unmistakable. So if these words are treated as a statement, the ἐγώ is a puzzle. It looks either redundant or uncharacteristically pompous – 'I myself will come and heal him.' One is reminded of long fellow's 'I myself, myself! Behold me!' (Grasswell, 2005, p. 110)

However, if this is a question, the emphatic ἐγώ has a real function: 'Shall I come and heal him?' This is an 'astonished or indignant question.' It is actually explained on the basis of racial distinction. For a Jew to enter a Gentile's house was to contradict the defilement (Acts 10-11). In fact, there is no record of Jesus ever entering a Gentile house or even touching the Gentile to heal him. His two healings of Gentiles were done by a word at a distance. Such an apparent reluctance on racial grounds would be closely parallel to Jesus' harsh reply to the Syro-Phoenician woman (Matthew 15:24, 26). The two stories are so closely parallel at many points that this analogy supports an apparent reluctance on Jesus' part rather than a ready response indicated by punctuating as a statement. Even if the racial overtone is doubted, an interrogative punctuation makes the dialogue flow more smoothly. The centurion has not made any formal request but simply presented the situation. Jesus' question is then drawing out the logical implication: 'So you want me to come and heal him?' The centurion's deprecatory reply then follows naturally (Heil, 1999, pp. 360-371).

In addition, what is the implication of Jesus' question? The parallel with the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman is illuminating here. Jesus was testing the faith of the supplicant by an apparent refusal (or at least reluctance). In each case, faith triumphs over this obstacle, proving stronger than a racial barrier, and in each case, Jesus then effects the cure in explicit response to this faith. Such a build-up to the story gives added point to Jesus' amazement at the centurion's faith, which is able to see beyond racial distinction, and this leads naturally to the universalistic pronouncement. Thus even this question of punctuation proves to have implications for the meaning of the story: the recognition of a question in these words of Jesus, and the implication of a testing of the centurion's faith, introduces already that contrast between Jewish racialism and the faith of the Gentile which Matthew has mentioned here and at several points in his Gospel. Luke significantly does not record this question, with its apparent reluctance, or the parallel story of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Dodd, 2016, pp. 201-209).

Is the centurion's deferential reply (notice κύριε again) due to a consciousness of racial distinction and respect for Jesus' scruples about entering a Gentile home or his thought more of his personal unworthiness in contrast with the greatness of Jesus? The whole of his reply said no word about race; apparently, his faith is such that the concept is irrelevant to him. His words are all concerned with the supreme authority of Jesus and his ability to heal. In the face of such an authority, he feels his personal unworthiness to receive Jesus and regards his personal visit as unnecessary since a word would be enough. Thus, the context suggests that his feeling of unworthiness is personal, not racial. These arguments from context are reinforced by the Greek word used ἰκανός which means at root 'sufficient', and thus suggests considerations of character rather than status. Hence, it denotes the impression made by the person of Jesus upon the Gentile centurion. He is not thinking about the ritual uncleanness which Jesus, as a Jew, would incur by entering a non-Jewish house. What he has in view is the majesty and the authority of Jesus, which lift him above everything human, especially in the non-Jewish sphere. On the lips of the centurion, the οὐχ ἔμιμ' ἰκανός is thus confession of the Messiahship

of Jesus. The word 'Messiahship' seems misconceived, but the exegesis of ἰχναός is both lexically and contextually sound (Rengstorf, 2013, pp. 11-17).

The request for healing by a mere word, uttered at a distance, has shown the extent of the centurion's faith. No such cures had yet been performed, as far as the records go. The centurion had heard of Jesus' healing work, perhaps seen it, but his faith goes beyond evidence of his senses. The healing of the centurion's servant was performed at a distance. The centurion was possibly an officer under Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He was kind to the Jews (7:3-6) and was undoubtedly a responsible Gentile. In this particular healing story, the suggestion seems to have come from the centurion himself that Jesus should not bother to come into contact with the sick servant. Thus, the impression is that the Gentile probably did not want Jesus to become ritually unclean by entering his house. However, Jesus' response to the centurion's request might be a promise, 'I will come and heal him.' It could also be a question, 'Shall I, a Jew, come to heal in a Gentile house?' If this latter rendering may be granted, then Jesus' attitude might have elicited some reluctance, which the centurion quickly understood; hence, his decision to request Jesus to heal his servant from a distance (Heil, 1999, pp. 55-64).

The picture of Jesus avoiding physical contact with the Gentiles appears in the healing of the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:25-30; Matthew 15:21-28). To the woman who approached him to cure her daughter of demon possession, Jesus is quoted as saying, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' for 'it is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs' (Alana, 2008, p. 37). Jesus' answer is, of course, a puzzle to the modern reader. It not only appears too bunt and bizarre but is embarrassing to all non-Jews of all ages. It tends to suggest that the salvation brought by Jesus is for the Jews alone. Yet, the Syro-Phoenician woman refused to be put off by Jesus' reply. She rather pleaded more with him to heal her demonized daughter. In the end, Jesus obliged, but he did not go home with the woman; he simply healed the sick girl from a distance (Alana, 1999, p. 98).

In the case of the Nobleman's son (John 4:46-50), despite the entreaties from the Nobleman that Jesus should follow him home to heal his sick son, he decided to heal the sick boy from a distance. The similarities between this story and that of the healing of the centurion's servant are quite noticeable. Both healing miracles took place in Capernaum, and both accounts talk of a Roman government official coming to Jesus to ask for his healing assistance. Moreover, on the two occasions, the healing that ensued took place from a distance. Hence, the two accounts are believed to be one and the same (Dopamu, 1998, pp. 88-95). The word was a normal part of the healing process, but it was actually uttered to the patient in person. The next point exposed the unlimited power with which the centurion credited Jesus. His confession of faith is one of the two key pronouncements in the story. Its main drift is clear: he likens Jesus' authority to that of an army officer, who needs only to speak the word to receive instant obedience. So Jesus needs only to speak the word, and the healing will be accomplished. However, there are some disputes about how exactly the comparison is made. The text, as actually printed, gives the centurion two contrasting observations:

- That he is under authority (and so much obeys order), and
- That he has soldiers under him who must obey him

So he knows his place in the chain of authoritative command (Grasswell, 2005, p. 81)

There is, however, evidence of a variant reading, particularly in the old Syriac version (never an authority to treated slightly), which would substitute for ὑπό ἐξουσίαν something like ἐν ἐξουσία or ἐξουσίαν ἐχών, thus eliminating the idea of subordination, and restricting the comparison entirely to the authority exercised by the centurion himself. There are, however, a number of good reasons why the reading 'under authority' (which is undisputed in Luke) should have been altered to 'in authority':

- Firstly, a tidy-minded scribe would be likely to take this simple means of eliminating a contrasting element and reducing the whole verse to a single point of comparison,
- Secondly, the mention of the centurion subordination might cause embarrassment if it was felt that there must be exact correspondence at every point to whom Jesus was 'under authority' (Green, 2014, pp. 213-222)

If then, one accepts reading 'under authority', is not this last point a problem, particularly in view of the phrase *καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ ...?* Must this not mean, 'For I too (like you) am a man under authority...?' and therefore make Jesus a mere man, a subordinate at that? However, an examination of the uses of *καὶ γὰρ* listed in AG (under *γὰρ*) shows many cases where it means simply 'for' or better, 'for indeed', and where there is no room for the meaning 'also'. So here, the translation 'For I indeed am a man under authority...' would be permissible without drawing a direct comparison between the status of the centurion and that of Jesus (Grundmann, 2010, pp. 94-98). Moreover, if one is to insist on the meaning 'For I too am ...', which is perhaps the more natural translation when *ἐγώ* follows directly after *καὶ γὰρ*, it is not legitimate to restrict the point of comparison to the first clause only ('under authority'), when, in fact, it is issuing, not the obeying, of orders which is one of the main themes in the passage. The *καὶ γὰρ* govern the whole sentence, not just the first words. The point could be made by paraphrasing, rather than tendentiously, 'For even I too, set as I am within a chain of authority, know what it is to give orders...' The minor points of the text and the translation covered in the last two paragraphs are, of course, inessential for a basic exegesis of the passage.<sup>28</sup> The main point is, beyond doubt, the assertion of Jesus' absolute authority by analogy with that of a military commander. However, the exegete is not, on this account, entitled to ignore the incidental details, particularly where these have given rise, as in this case, to doctrinal embarrassment (Gwyn, 1999, pp. 119-123).

Furthermore, the second pronouncement is the point to which the whole narrative has been building up. The punch line is introduced by the statement that Jesus was 'amazed' by what he heard. *θαυμάζω* is a verb that is used lightly. In particular, it is used only twice by Jesus himself, here in Luke and in Mark 6:6. Here, the object of this amazement is faith, but there, it is unbelief. The saying is introduced by *ἀμή* *ὕμιν*, the mark of a solemn, emphatic pronouncement.

It is often singled out as one of the characteristic rhetorical devices of Jesus, as a teacher of unique authority, since no other Jewish teacher of the time is known to have used the phrase. A statement thus introduced is to be carefully noted. The pronouncement is concerned with faith. This, as mentioned earlier, is a focal point in Luke, and it is clinched in the peculiarly Matthean 'As you believed, let it be done for you' faith. Here is a practical confidence in the power of Jesus to heal, based on a conviction of his supreme authority: so much one may infer from the centurion's saying, which gives rise to Jesus' commendation. It would be quite inappropriate to the narrative situation to ask whether this was saving, justifying faith in the Pauline sense, or whether it involves a doctrinal acceptance of the divinity of Jesus. These are questions derived from later theological development in the New Testament, which is certainly anachronistic when applied to the period of Jesus' ministry (Lohmeyer, 2003, pp.376-380).

Whether they occurred to Luke in his telling of the story may be considered shortly. However, for the original setting of the story and of Jesus' pronouncement, 'faith' must be interpreted in terms of its context as a practical trust based on a conviction of Jesus' power to heal. It involves the recognition that Jesus has a unique authority and wields supernatural power.

This unreserved evidence and acceptance of Jesus's authority amazes him and calls forth his commendation. Here is none of the suspicion or reservation of judgment which he had met with among his own people. Here is a man who has grasped fully more than any Jew what sort of person Jesus is and who is prepared to act decisively on that understanding. Moreover, the man is a Gentile. Jesus' mission was, first of all, to Israel. He deliberately restricted his activity during his lifetime to the chosen people and forbade his disciples for the time being to preach to the Gentile (Matthew 10:5-6). Spontaneously, there appears in a Gentile that very response that his Jewish mission had failed to evoke. It ignores and overrides racial barriers. A whole new horizon has opened up. This incident is a preview of the great insight which came later through another centurion's faith, 'Then to the Gentile also God granted repentance unto life' (Acts 11:18). The barrier between the chosen people and the rest of mankind is beginning to crumble (Heil, 1999, pp. 49-55).

The precise wording of Jesus' saying is slightly different in Matthew from that in Luke. Luke has the familiar 'Not even in Israel have I found such faith', but the original Matthean form is seen certainly to be, 'With no one in Israel have I found such faith' as a 'radikalisierten Form' compared with the Lucan. Instead of a general comparison of the centurion with Israel as a whole, the Matthean form states that not a single individual in Israel reaches his standard. It is thus a more all-embracing condemnation of Israel's unbelief and leads appropriately to the devastating saying added by Matthew (Matthew 8:11-12). The Lucan form could be construed as a veiled compliment to Israel: 'Not even in Israel (where I would most expect it) have I found such faith.' However, Matthean form leaves no room for a compliment. His emphasis is on the rejection of Israel as the chosen race (Grundmann, 2010, pp. 94-98).

Significantly, Matthew's addition to the story of some words of Jesus is almost certainly uttered in a different context and preserved elsewhere by Luke (13:28-29). The addition by Matthew clearly showed what was for him in the main point of the story. It is twofold:

- The centurion, by his faith, gives evidence that Gentiles are to find a place in the kingdom of God, and
- By the same token, the Jew who does not have this faith is to be rejected from that kingdom

Thus, Matthew sees faith as the means of entering the kingdom and race as irrelevant (Lohmeyer, 2003, pp.290-295). The days of a chosen race are finished. God's people are now those who believe, of whatever race. It may be objected that Matthew is pressing the story too far. There is no mention in the story of the saving faith or of entering the kingdom of God. The centurion's faith is simply a practical confidence in Jesus' healing power.

Obviously, Matthew is developing the theme beyond the actual narrative context, but is the development illiterate? Is not the man who recognises in Jesus a uniquely authoritative figure and whose faith is praised above that of any Jew rightly taken as the symbol of the coming Gentile church? Matthew is not misunderstanding and allegorizing a simple story; he is drawing the logical conclusion from the key pronouncement, which is the focus of the story.

The Gentile entering the kingdom. Πολλοί does not explicitly mean Gentile, of course, but in parallelism with the 'sons of the kingdom', who are Jews, it could have other meaning, and the context of Jesus' pronouncement about the centurion's faith in contrast with Israel confirms this. The words 'will come from east and west' echo a recurring Old Testament formula, seen, for instance, in Psalm 107:3; Isaiah 43: 5-6; 49:12. But the significant point is that these are predictions (or retrospective accounts) of God's regathering of the dispersed Jews. Their similar passages speak of Gentile (probably, though the reference could again be to the dispersed Jews) acknowledging and worshipping God in all parts of the earth, but not coming (e.g., Isaiah 45: 6; 59:19; Malachi 1:11). There are passages which predict the coming of the Gentile to Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3; 60:3-4), but not in the term used by Jesus. So it seems that Jesus, in predicting the coming of the Gentiles, deliberately does so in words recalling Old Testament hopes of gathering Israel (Boobyer, 1994, pp. 211-225).

The Gentile is envisaged as gathering for a banquet, ανακλιθήσονται, literally 'recline,' is correctly translated as 'sit at table' by RSV since it was a common practice in the ancient world to recline on couches by the table rather than to sit on chairs. This is no ordinary meal, however, but one shared with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is here taking up a common Jewish eschatological idea, where the joys of the Messianic age are pictured as a banquet. Derived from such Old Testament passages as Isaiah 25:6; 65:13, this theme was richly embroiled by later Jewish writers, both in the apocalyptic and the rabbinic traditions. It is worth mentioning that the presence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet (together with other great Old Testament figures) is specifically mentioned in two rabbinic passages (Pes. 119b; Exodus 25:8). There will be a brave, polite debate about which of them shall 'say grace', and in the end, the honour will go to David! However, the important point is that in these and most other relevant passages, the banquet is regarded as being for the Jews only: it is 'for the children of Isaac on the day when God will receive them into his favour' (Pes. 119b).

Sometimes the banqueters are regarded as 'the pious', but it is, often explicitly, the pious within Israel who are in mind (Holland, 2016, p. 535).

Jesus deliberately predicted that the eschatological banquet with the patriarchs to which the Jews looked forward as a national right would, in fact, include the Gentiles as well. For a Jew to sit at the table with Gentiles meant ritual defilement, and such an idea in the eschatological banquet would be unthinkable. However, Jesus is rejecting all racial barriers.

It is assumed that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the very founders of the Jewish race, will be happy to sit with Gentiles with no thought of defilement. Jesus is not predicting the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism – that would have been a very acceptable idea to many in his day. He envisaged their inclusion in the joys of the kingdom as Gentiles, apparently on equal terms with the patriarchs. Luke concludes with a minimum word; even in this brief conclusion, a comparison with the Lucan version reveals Matthew's overriding concern – faith again. Luke alone inserts the healing word of Jesus for which the centurion had asked, taking up the theme that focuses on his remarkable faith: 'As you have believed, let it be done for you.' In the synoptic accounts, healing frequently depends on faith; how much more healing at a distance (Loos, 2015, pp. 103-107).

The request for healing from a Gentile centurion gave rise to a significant dialogue with Jesus about authority. Faith has been taken further by Luke, both in the details of his telling of the story and particularly by the insertion of an independent saying of Jesus about membership in the kingdom of God. It provides a more comprehensive piece of teaching on the central importance of faith not only for healing but for salvation. Also, the inclusion of the true people of God for whom his eschatological blessings are reserved (Lovell, 2013, pp. 90-93).

The healing of Gentile's servant provided him with an excellent paradigm of the universal application of the work of Jesus, and he makes sure by the telling of the story and, in particular, by his insertion of Jesus' devastating saying that the message is not missed. This understanding is a result of the 'redaction-critical' exegesis of the pericope in comparison with the Matthean parallel. To ignore or to try to remove the differences in the treatment would have been to lose a vital part of what Luke wanted to emphasise. As a miracle story alone, the periscope is of great value, but Luke is concerned with teaching more than the miraculous power of Jesus (Wilkinson, 2001, pp. 90-93).

### 3. Conclusion

This study has shown that Christ Apostolic Church performs healing miracles because of Christ's promise of his divine healing in the Church. In the Synoptic Gospels, Christ was convinced of the active force in His life, which would project itself into world history in a strong union with the spirit of God. Thus, healings occur in Christ Apostolic Church because Christ lives in their midst. This is an important original idea in Mark's theology which John in his Gospel theologically translated into 'Because I live, ye shall live also' (Jn. 14:15-17, 18-19). Matthew puts it as 'Lo, I am with you always, even into the end of the earth' (Mt. 28:20). Jesus, in this way, is inseparable from his followers. This means that His spiritual presence would remain with those who use His name in any generation. Christ, therefore, remains the fibre of the spiritual power in the practice of healing in Christ Apostolic Church.

By his perpetual presence, the preparation for the coming kingdom of God endures and retains its inexhaustible power in Christ Apostolic Church. In the second place, as the full realization of the kingdom is yet to come, the activity of the Holy Spirit compliments the action of Christ. It is believed that the Holy Spirit is living and active in Christ Apostolic Church like some other Churches because they are members of the body of Christ. As they accept Christ in faith, the Holy Spirit comes into work with miracles according to the measure of an individual's faith. The mystical healing force is achieved in a mood of total surrender to the Holy Spirit and the risen Lord.

The healing miracles as a literary form in Gospel are as unique as Jesus posited. They explain basic historical events in a theological way on which Christ Apostolic Church faith is fashioned. Evangelists placed some emphasis on miracles. They aimed to desire the cosmic victory of Jesus in his war against Satan in preparation for the kingdom of God. They saw this as part of the divine plan of salvation. This is the image projected into the whole events of healing miracles in the Gospel (Richardson, 1994, p. 66). The historic mission of the disciples, the signs that will follow believers, and the theology of the cross contain an ultimate theological motif that transcends all. These concepts are the means by which Luke discussed the health scheme of Christians. He may not have apologetic intentions. They were interested in how the healing power of Jesus could be transmitted to future generations so that they could have good health and experience physical salvation on earth. Luke indeed connects the healing ministry of the earthly Jesus to the risen and exalted Lord. Jesus, as presented in the Gospel, was concerned with the health and general welfare of his followers. This implies that the Lord still heals in the church today as He did in his earthly ministry. He is, in this way, interested in the healing activities of the risen Lord in Christ Apostolic Church of all times (Shaw, 2005, pp. 32-40).

From the examination of A Contextual analysis of *ἰατρικὴ* in the gospel of Luke and its application in Christ Apostolic Church, it has been discovered that the concept of healing in the gospel has influenced the members of Christ Apostolic Church in their understanding of healing today. For Luke, healing miracles are manifestations of the power of God in Christ. The examination of the healings reveals that Jesus healed both bodies, mental and spiritual sicknesses. It also indicates that Jesus did not regard all sickness as demonic possession. It is also observed that the functions of the healing as the manifestations of the kingdom of God, the mystery of the Messiah who has power over sin, Satan, and sicknesses, and the theme of faith all are central to Luke's gospels (Short, 2010, p. 488).

The responses of members of Christ Apostolic Church indicate some relationship between healing in the church and those in Luke's gospels. Above all, Jesus is believed to be the healer. Healing is done, by faith, prayer, touching, anointing with oil, and distant cure. Healing miracles are looked upon as the manifestation of God's power and war against

the kingdom of Satan. Therefore, the research concludes that healing and healing methods in Luke's gospels are still relevant to modern man.

The contextual analysis of 'θεραπεία' in the gospel of Luke and the theological values of the healing by Jesus shows that vestiges of His healing theology persist in Christ Apostolic Church practice of healing miracles. These vestiges are still genuine even where a radically different method seems to be prevalent. Cases of people with protracted illnesses, medically certified incurable, have been miraculously cured in prayer houses in the Christ Apostolic Church. The research has shown that Christ Apostolic Church members strongly believe in God's power to heal (Sabin, 2005, p.58). Jesus' healing ministry is not a saving experience for the people healed in the Gospel alone but a saving experience for the Christian Church of all times. It may be correct to contend that religious experiences, in many cases, covert behaviours, which make verification difficult. However, the experience of healing miracles reverses the order because it can be tested. It is a visibly empirical reality, for example, when a lame man of some decades walks freely in the city after experiencing a healing miracle. This observable aspect of healing provides it with some degree of verification. It is because the blind man was healed that he could see (Sabourin, 1994, pp.54-62).

The concept of healing is one of the most fundamental issues in the Gospel and in Christ Apostolic Church doctrine. The huge success of Jesus' healing miracles in Gospel and among Christ Apostolic Church members could be traced to Luke's conception of the person of Jesus Christ as the most significant factor. The way in which Jesus is shown to have conducted his healing miracles and the various interpretation implies a Christology (Turner, 2008, pp79-83).

In this Christology, the evangelist believes that Jesus is the divine Son of God concealed in human form whose power and authority are manifested in his teachings and healing miracles. Christ fulfilled this role of divine Son with power and authority because of what He is. Thus, his vision of Jesus' divine person entirely permeated His healing miracle stories. The visible Jesus embodies harmoniously the invisible divine Christ that transcends His human nature. By this, His divine being enkindles his human nature of healing action. From this inner self, He releases a strong divine power that brings about healing miracles in agreement with the will of God (Oderinde, 2013, pp. 22-27).

This healing force comes from His divine being. It is empowered and reinforced by the Spirit of God for onward transmission to the sick by command of words. As the sick person releases his faith to touch the divine seat of the healing power in the being of Jesus, a current of divine health flows spiritually from Jesus to the being of the sick person. The immediate result is a miracle. Thus, the healing power of Jesus is in the nature of His divine person, the action of God, and the Holy Spirit in Him. Though healing miracle has been abused and there are a lot of false claims of healing that are not verifiable in the church today, many people who could have sought healing in the hospitals and got healed have lost their lives in the course of seeking healing miracles. However, this does not in any way discredit the fact that healing miracles are still a reality in the contemporary church (Turner, 2013, pp. 73-77).

#### 4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- The state of health facilities in Nigeria is poor.
- Corruption has not allowed the government to have enough funds to provide adequate health facilities.
- Therefore, the government should give urgent attention to improving the existing health facilities and creating new ones where people's yearnings and aspiration for good health can be met.
- Government should subsidize the cost of health services in order to make health facilities accessible to the poor masses.
- More funds should be invested in Mission hospitals to make them viable and functional.
- The Church must not only be a good example but also take the lead in providing some of these needed facilities as the early missionaries did and make them available to people at affordable prices.
- Healing should be an essential part of the proclamation of the Gospel message, and the church should place more emphasis on healing ministry following the example of Jesus. Total health and well-being should remain one sure way of proving to the doubting world that the kingdom of God is real and that healing is still relevant. However, this should not be at the expense of sound teaching on repentance and Christian living (Wieland. 2005, pp. 99-102).
- The authority of Christ Apostolic Church should ensure strict compliance with the principles and techniques of healing miracles adopted by Jesus in the gospel, according to Luke, to minimize dubious and magical practices.
- Christ Apostolic Church should regulate and control excesses and abuses that may occur through the ministers of miracles and the process of administering healing miracles in the church.

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